

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/700,027

Examiner

Sherman D. Basinger

Applicant(s)

TAFOYA ET AL.

Art Unit

3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to the amendment filed May 3, 2005.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-20.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 5/3/05&11/3/03 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

PD

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

The claims filed May 3, 2005 have been replaced with the following claims, which were filed March 11, 2005, because those filed May 3, 2005 were replete with numerous errors:

1. (Currently Amended) A marine reaction thruster for use within a marine hull, said thruster comprising:

an elongated housing having a cross-sectional configuration and opposing ends, a drive shaft opening through one of said opposing ends and a discharge opening through the other of said opposing ends, a wide end adjacent to said drive shaft opening, a bottom fluid inlet opening in said wide end, an upper opening, a tapering central portion between said inlet opening and said upper opening, and a tapering narrow end between said upper opening and said discharge opening;

a drive shaft extending longitudinally through said housing between said drive shaft opening and said narrow end of said housing, said drive shaft having a distal end;

a plurality of propellers having different diameter dimensions, each of said propellers being supported by said drive shaft and positioned for rotation within said tapering central portion of said housing, with the largest one of said propellers being adjacent to said inlet opening and the remainder of said propellers being positioned according to decreasing size between said largest propeller and said upper opening, said diameter dimensions of said propellers being selected to substantially fill said cross-sectional configuration of said housing;

inflow inducing means adapted for causing a large volume of fluid to flow through said inlet opening of said housing and into said wide end of said housing; ~~and-~~

at least one debris cutter supported by said drive shaft for rotation and said at least one

debris cutter being positioned relative to said propellers so that debris in seawater entering said bottom fluid inlet opening of said housing is ground into smaller pieces before it has an opportunity to slow rotation of said propellers; and

strut means associated with said upper opening in said housing and adapted for securing said distal end of said drive shaft so that the velocity of fluid moving across each successive one of said propellers is increased ~~for a total thrust reaction in fluid exiting said discharge opening of at least approximately twenty percent more than conventional propulsion systems of comparable size.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The thruster of claim 1 wherein said propellers are each positioned on said shaft at a ~~maximum~~ pitch angle of between approximately 10° to and 12° ~~for elimination of outgassing and cavitation.~~

3. (Original) The thruster of claim 1 wherein said fluid inflow means comprises an inlet plate having a keyhole-shaped opening with a smaller end that is positioned in the direction of forward movement of the marine hull to which it is attached, said keyhole-shaped opening being aligned with said inlet opening in said housing, and recessed fastener openings, said keyhole-shaped opening having a wider end and being configured with outside edges designed to cause eddys to form and seawater to flow therethrough at the center portion of said outside edges.

4. (Original) The thruster of claim 3 wherein said inlet plate further comprises a plurality of recessed fastener openings for flush mounting within a marine hull.

5. (Original) The thruster of claim 1 further comprising a front casting connected to the one of said opposing ends of said housing having a drive shaft opening.

6. (Original) The thruster of claim 1 further comprising a reverse and steering assembly

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aligned with the one of said opposing ends of said housing having said discharge opening, and wherein said reverse and steering assembly comprises rudders and a movable gate selectively positioned to block rearward flow of fluid exiting said discharge opening of said housing and traveling through said reverse and steering assembly.

7. (Original) The thruster of claim 6 wherein said rudders are connected by a tie bar and have Ackerman geometry that allows one to move more than the other and vice versa.

8. (Original) The thruster of claim 6 wherein said rudders have a crescent-shaped configuration.

9. (Currently Amended) The thruster of claim 1 wherein said at least one debris cutter ~~further comprising~~ comprises a debris cutter ~~supported by said drive shaft for rotation and cutting in the direction of rotation, with said debris cutter being positioned adjacent to and forward of all~~ said propellers.

10. (Currently Amended) The thruster of claim ~~9~~ 1 wherein each said propeller has a hub, and further comprising at least one additional debris cutter supported by said drive shaft for rotation and cutting in the direction of rotation, with said at least one additional debris cutter being selected from a group consisting of cutters positioned at one of said hubs and forward of the next adjacent one of said propellers and cutters positioned forward of said strut.

11. (Currently Amended) A marine reaction thruster for use within a marine hull, said thruster comprising:

an elongated housing having a cross-sectional configuration and opposing ends, a drive shaft opening through one of said opposing ends and a discharge opening through the other of said opposing ends, a wide end adjacent to said drive shaft opening, a bottom ~~water~~ fluid inlet

opening in said wide end, an upper opening, a tapering central portion between said inlet opening and said upper opening, and a tapering narrow end between said upper opening and said discharge opening;

a drive shaft extending longitudinally between said drive shaft opening and said narrow end of said housing, said drive shaft having a distal end;

a plurality of propellers having different diameter dimensions, each of said propellers being supported by said drive shaft and positioned for rotation within said tapering central portion of said housing, with the largest one of said propellers being adjacent to said inlet opening and the remainder of said propellers being positioned according to decreasing size between said largest propeller and said upper opening, said diameter dimensions of said propellers being selected to substantially fill said cross-sectional configuration of said housing, and further wherein said propellers are each positioned on said drive shaft at a maximum pitch angle of 10° to 12° to eliminate outgassing and cavitation;

an inlet plate having a keyhole-shaped opening with a smaller end that is positioned in the direction of forward movement of the marine hull to which it is attached, said keyhole-shaped opening being aligned with said inlet opening in said housing, and recessed fastener openings, said keyhole-shaped opening having a wider end at rear and being configured with outside edges that widen from the smaller end causing eddys to form and seawater to flow therethrough at the center portion of said outside edges; and

strut means associated with said upper opening in said housing and adapted for securing said distal end of said drive shaft so that the velocity of fluid moving across each successive one of said propellers is increased for a total thrust reaction in fluid exiting said discharge opening of

at least twenty percent.

12. (Original) The thruster of claim 11 wherein said strut means comprises a strut plate configured for connection to said housing over said upper opening and a strut downwardly depending from said strut plate into said housing.

13. (Currently Amended) The thruster of claim 11 further comprising a reverse and steering assembly aligned with the one of said opposing ends of said housing having said discharge opening for fluid communication therebetween, and wherein said reverse and steering assembly comprises two crescent-shaped rudders with Ackerman geometry and a gate movable between a position that allows rearward flow of fluid from said reverse and steering assembly and a position whereby said rearward flow of fluid from said reverse and steering assembly is blocked.

14. (Original) The thruster of claim 11 wherein said rudders are connected by a tie bar and have Ackerman geometry that allows one to move more than the other in a selected turn and vice versa, while not creating drag or turbulence when in a steering mode.

15. (Original) The thruster of claim 11 further comprising at least one debris cutter supported by said drive shaft for rotation, with said at least one ~~additional~~ debris cutter being positioned relative to said propellers so that debris in seawater entering said inlet opening is ground into smaller pieces before it has an opportunity to slow rotation of said propellers.

16. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a marine reaction thruster for a marine vessel having an engine and a hull, ~~which causes a total thrust reaction for the marine vessel of at least twenty percent more than conventional propulsion systems of comparable size,~~ said method comprising the steps of:

providing a marine hull, an elongated housing having a wide end, a narrow end, and a tapering central portion therebetween, a drive shaft, inflow inducing means, strut means, at least one debris cutter, and a plurality of propellers each having a different diameter dimension sized for positioning said propellers within said tapering central portion of said housing at a spaced-apart distance from ~~the other ones of said propellers~~ one another and said diameter dimensions of said propellers also being only slightly smaller than said housing when positioned within its tapering central portion;

creating a bottom fluid inlet opening in said housing adjacent to said wide end;

creating an upper opening in said housing between said central portion and said narrow end;

creating a drive shaft opening in said wide end;

creating a discharge opening in said narrow end;

securing said housing within said marine hull;

positioning said propellers on said drive shaft for rotation at maximum pitch angles of approximately 10° to 12° with pitch increases so as to maintain fluid velocity while increasing the discharge volume for increased thrust ~~and in decreasing order of said diameter dimension;~~

positioning said at least one debris cutter relative to said propellers so that debris in seawater entering said bottom fluid inlet opening is ground into smaller pieces before it has an opportunity to slow rotation of said propellers;

extending said drive shaft through said drive shaft opening in said housing so that said propellers are positioned within said tapering central portion of said housing and the largest one of said propellers is adjacent to said inlet opening;

using said strut means in association with said upper opening to secure said drive shaft and said propellers centrally within said tapering central portion of said housing; and

aligning said inflow inducing means with said inlet opening so that a large volume of fluid is caused to flow through said inlet opening of said housing when said marine hull moves in a forwardly direction.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said fluid inflow inducing means comprises an inlet plate having a keyhole-shaped opening with a wider end, a smaller end, and said wider end having outside edges designed to cause eddys to form and seawater to flow into therethrough at the center portion of said outside edges, and further comprising the step of positioning said smaller end in the direction of forward movement of said marine hull, and the step of aligning said keyhole-shaped opening with said inlet opening in said housing.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16 further comprising a step of providing a reverse and steering assembly thruster having ~~erecent-shaped~~ rudders with Ackerman geometry and a gate movable between a position that allows rearward flow of fluid from said reverse and steering assembly and a position whereby said rearward flow of fluid from said reverse and steering assembly is blocked, and also comprising a step of aligning said reverse and steering assembly with said discharge opening in said housing.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~16 further comprising the steps of~~ ~~providing at least one debris cutter, supporting said at least one debris cutter on said drive shaft~~ ~~for rotation and cutting in the direction of rotation, and positioning said at least one debris cutter~~ ~~relative to said propellers so that debris in seawater entering said inlet opening is ground into~~ ~~smaller pieces before it has an opportunity to slow rotation of said propellers~~ 18 wherein said

rudders have a crescent-shaped configuration.

20. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein said steps of creating, securing, positioning, and aligning are accomplished in a different order.

2. The errors in the claims filed May 3, 2005 are in claim 11 where in the second paragraph "opening in said wide end, an upper opening, a tapering central portion between said inlet opening and said upper opening, and a tapering narrow end between said upper opening and said" was left out; are the filing of two of claim 12, the first claim 12 leaving out language and repeating the last line of claim 11; and in the second paragraph of claim 16 leaving out "providing a marine hull, an elongated housing having a wide end, a narrow end, and a tapering central portion therebetween, a drive shaft, inflow inducing means, strut means, at least".

3. The claims which replace claims 1-20 filed May 3, 2005 are those filed March 11, 2005 with two minor changes. At the end of claim 13, the brackets around the underlined period have been deleted, and in claim 16, line 23, the spelling of "slow" has been corrected.

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 1 and the claims depending therefrom are allowed in view of the limitation "at least one debris cutter supported by said drive shaft for rotation and said at least one debris cutter being positioned relative to said propellers so that debris in seawater entering said bottom fluid inlet opening of said housing is ground into smaller pieces".

None of the art of record including Burg provides motivation to modify Aschauer 961 to have such a debris cutter.

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Claim 11 and the claims depending thereon are allowed in view of the limitation "an inlet plate having a keyhole-shaped opening with a smaller end that is positioned in the direction of forward movement of the marine hull to which it is attached, said keyhole-shaped opening being aligned with said inlet opening in said housing, and recessed fastener openings, said keyhole-shaped opening having a wider end at rear and being configured with outside edges that widen from the smaller end causing eddys to form and seawater to flow there through at the center portion of said outside edges". None of the art of record provide motivation to modify Aschauer 961 to have such an opening.

Claim 16 and the claims depending therefrom are allowed in view of claim 16 now defining the debris cutter and its positioning and in view of the limitation "positioning said propellers on said drive shaft for rotation at maximum pitch angles of approximately 10 degrees to 12 degrees with pitch increases so as to maintain fluid velocity while increasing the discharge volume for increased thrust". None of the art of record including Burg provide motivation to modify Aschauer 961 to provide and position a debris cutter as claimed and to position the propellers on the drive shaft for rotation at maximum pitch angles of approximately 10 degrees to 12 degrees with pitch increases so as to maintain fluid velocity while increasing the discharge volume for increased thrust.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably


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accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sherman D. Basinger whose telephone number is 571-272-6679. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Samuel J. Morano can be reached on 571-272-6684. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

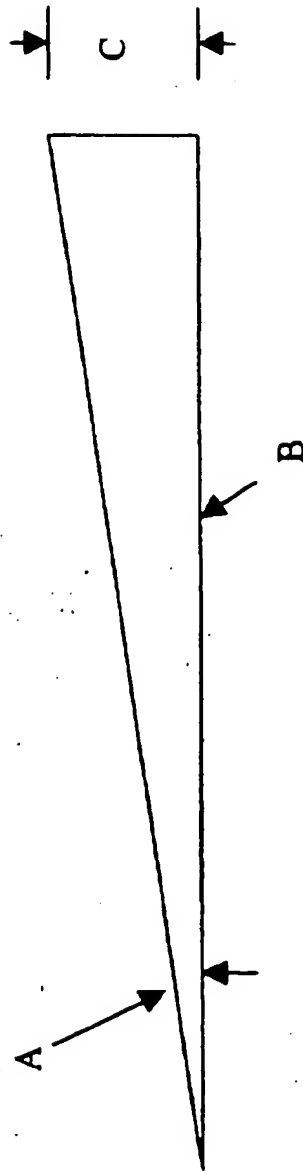
Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Sherman D. Basinger
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3617

5/11/05

NEW DRAWING SHEET - Inventors: Samuel B. Tafoya + Hans G. Broemel Title: Marine Reaction Thruster
 Serial Number: 10/700,027 File Date: November 3, 2003 Examiner: Sherman D. Basinger Group Art Unit: 3617

approved
SM
5/11/05



A = 10° - 12° pitch angle

B = propeller circumference

C = propeller pitch -- theoretical distance the propeller would advance in one revolution

FIG. 16